to have deviations from specifications with regard to certain parameters. Depending upon the nature and extent of deviations from the specifications, State Governments who are empowered to take action under penal provisions of the ECA, 1955, took various actions like giving warning, cancellation of dealer's registration certificate, levying of penalty and launching prosecutions. During 1996-97, 220 prosecutions were launched, two convictions were secured, three cases are pending in Courts of Law and 352 cases were pending for initiating action at the end of that period.

Livestock Census in Maharashtra

3987. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether livestock census has recentrly been conducted in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, what is the present population of cattle particularly those of milching ones;

(b) what is the status of cross breed cattle in the State; and

(d) the steps being taken to improve the number and breed of livestock in the State by the Central and State Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) Livestock Census is undertaken after every five years. The work of Quinquennial Livestock Census conducted in 1997 is being processed.

(c) As per 1992 Livestock Census, the Population of miliching and crossbred cattle in Maharashtra is as below:

(Nos. in thousand)

Crossbred	Indigenous		Total
Milching cattle	826	4441	5267
Total cattel	1773	15673	17446

(d) To improve the number and breed of livestock in the State, a numbe of Central/ State Government programmes/schemes are being implemented in the state. The important schemes are as follows:—

(i) Extension of Frozen Semen Technology and Progeny Testing Programme.

(ii) National Bull Production programme.

(iii) Integrated Dairy Development Project in Non-Operation Flood, Hilly and Backward areas.

(iv) Special Livestock Breeding Programme.

Export of Agricultural Products

3988. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to boost export of certain agricultural products and farm goods;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard; and

(c) the targets set for export of agro-products during this year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The policy of the government to permit exports of agricultural products and farm goods is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximising farm incomes and earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of agricultural products is an ongoing process and accordingly policy interventions are made, as and when considered necessary, with a view to making agricultural exports increasingly viable.

(b) Some of the steps taken/proposed to be taken to enhance exports of agricultural products and farm include:—

1. Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material, upgradation to tenchical knowhow of farmers through demonstrations, trainings and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, area expansion, supply of minikits for vegetables, improving productivity and training of farmers.
2. Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment.
3. Providing financial assistance to exporters/ growers/Cooperative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transport units, establishment of precooling/cold storage facilities and integrated postharvest handling systems (pack houses).

4. Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, strengthening of quality control.
5. Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for improving the acceptability of the product, especially the mangoes in overseas markets.
6. Grant of Air Freight Subsidy for exports of selected fresh vegetables and fruits.
7. Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions.
8. Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits and vegetables.
9. Abolition of cess on export of pepper (except green pepper in brine), cardamom, saffron and spice oils and oleoresins to make them price competitive in the overseas markets, setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality, technology transfer; process upgradation and product development.
10. Providing assistance in development of data-base and dissemination of market information.

(c) Value of Export of Agricultural products excluding plantation products, is likely to attain a level of US $ 4 billion in 1998-99.

Crop Diseases

3989. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of spreading of diseases on crops in the country during the last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what remedial measures have been taken by Government, togetherwith the long-term measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) Reports were received of spread of various diseases in some crops in certain state during the last year. The details of the diseases and the crops and States affected are given in the attached statement (*see* below).

(c) The remedial measures taken by Central and State Governments include:—

(1) Distribution of seeds of disease resistant varieties to the farmers and recommending their use. Some of the disease resistant varieties are given below:—

(i) Cotton: CNH 1012, CNH 123, RS 2013, RS992, LRK 516, LRA 5166, LH1556, LH144, RG 8 — against curl virus.

(ii) Paddy: Musuri, Prasad, Saket, 1R64, Daya, Rasi, Kunti, Pantdhan 10, Vikramarya, Radha- against bacterial leaf blight, blast and tungro

(iii) Soyabean: PK 1029, 1024, Ankur, JS80 1 against rust

(iv) Potato: Kufri Badshah— against late blight.

(2) Regular sample roving surveys are organised to monitor incidence of diseases and for undertaking control operations.

(3) Integrated disease management strategy is popularised which consist of

— control of seedborne diseases,

— avoiding excessive use of nitrogeneous fertilizer

— rational use of water and fertilizers to avoid disease build up,

— adoption of cultural, varietal and mechanical measures for disase control,

— need based use of safer fungicides,

— encouraging use of microbial pesticides particularly to control seed and soilborne pathogens,

— training and education of extension functionaries and farmers through on-form demonstrations.

In addition to the above, research efforts are being intensified by the India Council of Agricultural Research to develop more disease resistant varieties of seeds for various crops.